

The League of Women Voters

A Voice For Citizens, A Force For Change

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January 26, 2017

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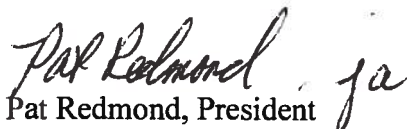
Phyllis Tugman-Alexander

The League of Women Voters Alaska (LWVAK) supports the passage into law of HB 31, Sexual Assault Examination Kits. LWVAK recognizes the importance of a coordinated effort by law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and the medical community when it comes to dealing with sexual assault. In addition, the League of Women Voters United States (LWVUS) endorsed the Violence Against Women Act and asks that an emphasis be put on violence prevention. Sexual assault is a violent act that leaves its victims traumatized, sometimes for decades or longer. Any steps taken to enhance the collection of data regarding sexual assault and the coordination between police, prosecutors, and judges will be a step toward the prevention of sexual violence.

HB 31 requires the State to establish a tracking system as well as collection and processing protocols so that timely testing of sexual assault kits can occur. In addition, HB 31 requires that police departments in the State of Alaska submit sexual assault kits within 18 months of collection. Adding the data from the testing of a sexual assault kit to a larger database can help apprehend serial rapists and result in justice for the victim as well as the removal of a dangerous person from the opportunity to create another victim.

The large backlog of kits that have never been submitted for testing and, therefore, never tested demands a standardized method of handling this evidence. An inventory must be made of untested kits and an ongoing effort established to see that the results of these kits are entered into a statewide database. The measures required in HB 31 can assist in preventing violence against women and men. Passing these measures into law is a responsible step in the right direction.

Thank you for your serious consideration.


Pat Redmond, President

League of Woman Voters Alaska